



COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 63/12

12 NOVEMBER 2012

The purpose of this Report is to provide Members with a progress report on the first six months of the Town Council's two new projects: the appointment on 25 April of a Community Development Worker and on 14 May of an Economic Development Worker.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) Members will recall that these projects were a direct and specific response to the town's needs revealed in the publication of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 and the locally produced Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011 with their clear evidence of the extent and depth of deprivation within the town.
 - b) In summary, they revealed that Ventnor's central area is among the five most deprived of the 89 areas into which the Island is divided for deprivation measures, known as Lower Super Output Areas.
 - c) In the national picture, the central area falls in the 20% most deprived nationally and Upper Ventnor within the most deprived 25%, with these two areas being home for half the town's residents.
 - d) The projects were an acknowledgement by the Town Council that making a difference in these circumstances needed maximum involvement of residents, particularly through collaboration with the town's 65 voluntary organisations, and a matching involvement with those involved in local economic activity.
 - e) The first six months of both projects have been about the background work of developing the essential foundations from which specific actions and activities can grow. By its very nature, the work has only been visible to those directly involved with it or through it.
 - f) This interim report on the work to date of both is to provide Members with a fuller picture of that work.
-

2) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

a) Ventnor Timebank

- o *Major Priority:* establishing the Timebank has been the major priority of the project's first six months. The Community Development Working Group (CDWG) has seen this as the most effective structure for meaningful community development and support. It makes it possible for volunteers to both offer and receive assistance across a wide range of free services.
 - o *Steering Group:* the work of establishing it has been undertaken by a Steering Group of volunteers including several people who have had no previous connection with the Town Council's work as well as some who have. They include two qualified professionals, two who are retired and three with young families. They have met most weeks to agree policies and practices as well as planning and delivering a series of related events and undertaking training.
 - o *Core Documents:* the Timebank has achieved a stand-alone status with a Constitution of its own and core documents that to date include a Child Protection Policy, Child Protection Statement, Equality & Diversity Policy, Data Protection Guidelines, Joining Form, Services Request Form and Operating Regulations.
 - o *Launch Event:* the Timebank was launched with a very successful event at Ventnor Library on 22 September with volunteer-provided refreshments, face painting and crafts for children and a formal opening by the Island's MP Andrew Turner. South Wight TV's film of the event has attracted over 1,000 viewings.
 - o *Other Events:* information sessions have been delivered at Ventnor Children's Centre in June
-

and at the Library and Country Market in July. A Social Enterprise and Timebank Event is in place for 28 November attended by one of the UK's most successful Timebanks, Creation South Wales. Further information sessions have been agreed with the Isle of Arts SingAbout in December.

- *Publicity:* the launch and other events have been covered by the *County Press*, *Isle of Wight Radio*, *Events on the Wight* and the *Chronicle*. More than 300 leaflets were delivered door-to-door in Upper Ventnor.
- *Available Services:* more than 40 individuals have signed up to provide services within the Timebank framework. The TimebankUK software that is used to record them has 130 service categories and Ventnor's already has offers within nearly two-thirds of them, a total of 85 or 65%. The list of services on offer is too long to include here but is attached as Appendix A to this report.

b) Southern Housing Group

- *Partnership Working:* around 20% of Ventnor's population lives in Southern Housing Group's 410 properties within the town's two most deprived areas. The opportunity for partnership working stemmed from the breakfast meeting for senior staff of the professional service organisations active in the town held in January and been developed by its Senior Community Regeneration Officer Mark Meredith.
- *Practical Support:* In addition to the £5,000 contribution to the project's cost (25% of the total) based on the anticipated benefits to their residents, Mark Meredith has been willing and able to contribute time to support the project and contribute to its development significantly.
- *Monitoring:* professional monitoring of the Timebank element of the project is undertaken by Southern Housing Group on a quarterly basis.
- *Future Funding:* Southern Housing Group have raised the possibility, subject to continuing satisfactory monitoring of extending its funding support into a second year.

c) Connections

- *Groups:* The necessary priority given to the Timebank's establishment has meant that the major connections with local voluntary and community organisations have had to wait until later in the project, the Community Development Worker has had constructive meetings with representatives of: Bonchurch Community Association, Lowtherville Community Association, Ventnor Country Market, Friends of Ventnor Library, Ventnor Business Association, Ventnor Rotary Club, Ventnor Sea Kayaking, Age Isle of Wight and Ventnor Children's Centre
- *Timebanking for organisations:* the Community Development Worker is promoting timebanking to community and voluntary organisations as a way of identifying casual volunteers and bringing community and voluntary groups together to share space and resources.
- *Leaflet Set:* a set of advice leaflets for voluntary and community organisations is well underway under the banner of *Help is at Hand*. The first three – *Effective Marketing*, *Project Management* and *Social Media* – are complete and being circulated to all 65 groups this month.
- *Contact Database:* the new Contact Database built by the Town Council's Economic Development Worker includes a dedicated section for local voluntary and community sector organisations. It already contains contact information for at least one member of each and will be extended over the coming months to provide an excellent basis for ongoing communications.
- *Social Media:* a Facebook page – Ventnor Community-Development – is available and has attracted over 40 friends to date.

d) External Contacts

- *Events attended:* the Community Development Worker attended the national *Charity Fair* to take advantage of two days of Seminars and Workshop sessions. She also took attended the Seminar on Welfare Reform held at County Hall organised by the Department of Work & Pensions that covered changes to Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit.
- *Other Contacts:* contacts have also been established with Andrew Turner MP, Community Action Isle of Wight, Northampton Hospital Timebank, Time to Give, Charities Minister Nick Hurd MP, Portsmouth University Organisational Timebanking Research Team and Portsmouth City Council's Communities Engagement Manager. Good practice from Ventnor Timebank's Core paperwork has been shared with Portsea Timebank.

e) **Town Council**

The Community Development Group has met with the Community Development Worker and Town Clerks on five occasions during the project period to date.

3) **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

a) **First Priority**

- *Economic Activity:* The Project Brief had identified three discrete areas of investigation – the town centre, tourism and business – and it was agreed that the first priority was an understanding of the issues, expectations and potential for development of the town centre trading areas of the High Street, Pier Street and Church Road, a total of 97 shops and businesses.
- *Methodology:* it was also agreed that qualitative information would be the most valuable for future planning and would be prioritised over the collection of numerical quantitative data. It was recognised, and soon confirmed, that the collection and collation of relevant, reliable and detailed qualitative data is heavily time-intensive.

b) **Surveys**

- *First Survey:* the project proper therefore started with a documented survey of 10 selected town centre traders who were visited over a 5 week period to understand their perspective on the local economic conditions and problems with the town centre, their views on the apparently dwindling tourist trade and how certain problems could be remedied. A visit to a single trader often took several hours while they continued their daily custom and business.
- *Second Survey:* these initial discussions were followed by a further survey of 35 town centre traders and business over a period of about 6 weeks that often revealed additional areas of concern and economic need. Alongside these discussions with the individual traders came many opportunities to talk with local shoppers and visitors which, although delaying the work in hand at the time, provided new insights into the views, experiences and perceptions of town centre visitors, their purchasing habits and their interactions between local consumers and shopkeepers.

Third Survey: over a period of a couple of weeks and electronic survey informed by the findings from the first two surveys and made available to town centre traders for completion and return. However, the take-up was low and conclusion was drawn that the clear preference of traders was to communicate on a one-to-one basis. The survey was then put into hard copy form and the remaining traders visited for the necessary information with most being happy to contribute.

c) **Contact Database**

During the early weeks, the Economic Development Worker took on an additional task of designing and creating a contact database with the capacity to store contact information for all the town's voluntary and community organisations as well as for the town centre traders and, in due course, accommodation, tourism and leisure providers.

d) External Research

Extensive additional research into modern trading practice nationally and internationally and the use of new technologies in retailing has been undertaken by the Economic Development Worker throughout this initial period of the project, yielding findings of real significance for the strategic planning which needs to follow.

e) Presentations

- The research also informed the analysis of the substantial amount of the local qualitative analysis gathered by the three surveys.
- Summaries of the data and the analysis of it have been reported to the Economic Development Group through a series of detailed powerpoint presentations and that framework has also been developed for discussions within the staff team as well as in one meeting with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- At this stage we have a series of 7 such presentations available for further discussion and analysis with a total of over 180 slides, a small selection from which are attached to this report as Appendix B to give Members a flavour of the findings to date.

f) Statistical tool

- Although qualitative research within the town centre environment has been the major priority for this period, development work is progressing well for an electronic statistical tool that will enable the collection and collation of detailed socio-economic data.
- The emphasis is on creating functionality that will provide detailed analyses over time series with forecasting ability that will output understandable graph and graphic representations of the underlying statistics.
- The prototype for this is now in place together with a project plan for its full development.

g) Access to Employment

- Another product of the discussions the Economic Development Worker has had with a range of agencies and particularly with the staff of Job Centre Plus is the emergence a project to assist unemployed Ventnor residents in accessing employment opportunities.
- The focus will be the opportunity to sign on in Ventnor itself rather than travelling to Newport. This central contact will be used to offer and, hopefully, provide support a range of employability support services and awareness of job opportunities.
- Other local agencies, including Southern Housing Group, Ventnor Library and the Children's Centre are currently providing related services and we are planning to host a working lunch round table project development with those agencies and both Job Centre Plus and the Isle of Wight College.

h) Connections

- During the research period of the project, approximately 150 shopkeepers and professional business people were approached in order to obtain their personal opinions about the town centre, their trading and financial problems encountered over the past three years, their perceptions on local tourism and their expectations about the future of Ventnor.
 - Good communications with the town's shopkeepers and business people has now been established and is the basis for regular connections and conversations often on first name terms.
 - The contacts with the 7 licensed restaurants and 4 public houses established during the research period are a valuable base for the more detailed investigation of the hospitality and leisure industry in and around Ventnor that is due to be undertaken next.
 - Some connections have also been established with landlords of town centre premises,
-

including with owner of the bus station during the Economic Development Worker's contribution to the plans for the Christmas in Ventnor event.

- Externally, very strong connections have been established through the project with Job Centre Plus and the Chamber of Commerce.
- **Town Council**
- The Economic Development Group has met with the Economic Development Worker and Town Clerks on four occasions during the project period to date.

4) **DECISIONS**

- a) The Town Council is asked to approve the proposal from the Community Development Working Group to arrange an anniversary consultation meeting with the town's voluntary and community organisations in either the last week in January or the first in February 2013 in order to report on progress since the meetings at the beginning of this year and invite guidance on priorities for the next year.
 - b) The Town Council is asked to formally adopt the Commitments proposed by the Economic Working Group as the basis for the development of objectives and targets related to each of them to be submitted to the January meeting of the Town Council.
-

VENTNOR TIMEBANK: CURRENT SERVICES WITH PROVIDERS

Ad Hoc Volunteering	Listening
Art and Design	Literacy
Art Space	Litter-picking
Assist with maths	Maths
Assist with reading	Metalwork
Assist with writing books	Nutritional advice
Assist with writing music	Occasional sort-outs
Assist with writing scripts	Painting
Assisting at events	Pet care
Assisting with big events, eg., Fringe/Arts	Plant watering
Attending Meetings (Groups)	Playing an instrument
Book Keeping Businesses	Provide local knowledge
Book Keeping – self employment	Sewing
Budgeting (Business)	Shifts at Community Groups/Cafes
Budgeting (Personal)	Shopping
Car washing	Singing
Chiropractor	Social media/promotion
Companionship	Support at meetings
Computer skills	Swimming
Computer skills – general	Teach foreign language
Cooking	Teach reading
Crochet	Theatre
Decorating	Therapies
DIY	Typing/word processing
Dog walking	Visiting
Drawing	Walking companion
Errands	Word processing
Escort to appointments	
Exercise companion	
Face painting	
Film/cinema	
Form filling	
Form filling/Advocacy and support	
General gardening	
General office skills	
Giving lifts	
Heavy moving	
Help with form filling	
House sitting	
Housework	
Improving open space	
Interpreting	
Ironing	
Knitting	
Landscaping	
Leaflet delivery	
Leafleting	
Letter writing	
Lift to work	
Lifting	
Lifts with car	

Appendix B

Trader Concerns



OPENING HOURS	
Mon	8.30 - 5.30
Tues	8.30 - 5.30
Wed	8.30 - 5.30
Thur	8.30 - 5.30
Fri	8.30 - 7.00
Sat	8.30 - 5.00
Sun	Closed

- Improvement to car parking 70%
- Action for free car parking 65%
- Improved town signage 40%
- Action against shops closing early 85%
- Action against shops not opening 96%
- Lack of premises expansion 43%
- Improved shop windows 56%
- Improvement to shop diversity 72%
- Action to raise Ventnor profile 38%
- Amount of direct trading 96%
- Operational trading problems 64%
- Problems with weather 51%
- Actions to increase visitors 90%
- Action to hold events and market 74%
- Customers want cheap goods 48%
- Customers browsing not buying 62%
- Action for more coach parties 48%


Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Approx. Trading Types

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 6 Public houses | 1 Bank | 6 Estate agents |
| 1 Off license | 3 Taxis firms | 3 Charity shops |
| 10 Restaurants & cafes | 2 Pharmacies | 3 Empty shops |
| 1 Fish & chip shop | 2 Hardware shops | |
| 1 Butcher | 1 Eyes & specs | |
| 3 Supermarkets | 1 Veterinary practice | |
| 2 Food shops | 1 Pet shop | |
| 3 Takeaway shops | 7 Antique shops | |
| 1 Fish & chip shop | 2 Toy shops | |
| 6 Haberdashery shops | 2 Gift shops | |
| 3 Jewellery shops | 1 Tattoo studio | |
| 5 Clothes Shops | 3 Art & craft shops | |
| 3 Beauty & hair shops | 1 Internet cafe | |
| 2 Shoe shops | 1 Photographer | |
| 1 Launderette | 1 Motorcycle shop | |
| 2 Newsagents | 1 Bathroom showroom | |
| 1 Flower shop | 1 Printing firm | |

Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012


Local Customers' Interests



Convenience shopping experience.
Lower and competitive pricing structures.
Customer brand choices and perceptions.
Alternative product ranges and services.
Shopping discounts and savings cards.
Loyalty cards and comfort advertising.
Free car parking and shopping trolleys.
Regular and reliable opening times.
Relationship with transport and fuel.
Internet shopping with online banking.
Potential delivery to doorstep service.
High pressure Marketing communications.

Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

General Perceptions



Disappointed
 Tatty
 Run down
 Strange people
 Expected more
 Poor shops
 May not come again
 Slightly rough
 Didn't expect this
 Nothing to buy
 Prefer to go elsewhere
 Dirty place
 Like a ghost town
 Shop keepers unfriendly
 No tourist information

I have lived here all my life. I love Ventnor but I can't afford to shop here every day, it's too expensive and I don't get all I need. But there are some good shops here like the fruit and veg shop. I don't use the butchers because when I get home their meat is always off. (agreement by another pensioner). The supermarkets are too pricey for me here. I like to go to Shanklin or Sandown for my shopping usually.


Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Customer Satisfaction

- It means providing trustworthy information on your products and services; fulfilment of sales promises; and providing information if delivery problems occur and also tell disgruntled customers what the business is doing about their problem.
- This is fundamental marketing communications between you and your customers.
- Customer satisfaction is the key antecedent to customer loyalty and repurchase.
- Satisfied customers are less price sensitive and willing to pay a higher price for goods. They trust you.
- Developing trust, commitment, communication and satisfaction between you and your customers creates a relationship environment for your customers, and therefore their loyalty.
- Customers are loyal when they are satisfied with the quality services and products delivered by retailers.

Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Local Dissatisfaction

Inconvenient shopping experience.
Unable to match competitive pricing.
Reduced customer brand choices.
Limited product ranges and services.
Limited or no shopping discounts.
Lost community loyalty and sustainability.
Limited or no easy-reach car parking.
Variable and unreliable opening times.
No local provision of transport fuel.
Unlikely to have Internet shopping facilities.
Usually no delivery to doorstep service.
Inadequate marketing and advertising.
Unmaintained shop fronts and window displays.

Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Relationship Marketing

- Food and grocery is the second largest segment of the retail trade. 70% of the total retail sales.
- Convenience stores, department stores, supermarkets, speciality stores and hypermarkets.
- Customer relationship marketing has become the key to greater understanding of customer's needs and expectations.
- Relationship marketing focuses on trust, commitment, communication and customer satisfaction.
- These aspects govern how your customer will react to you, your products and services.
- Trust is the most important part of relationship marketing with your customers.
- Fulfilling promises equally important as a means of achieving customer satisfaction, retention of customer base and long-term profitability, thereby completing the trust-cycle.



Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Future for the Young



Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Retail Strategy

Early format trading models, will see small traders fail and out of business.

Without determination to embrace the new retail direction and technologies, the town will fade.

There will be no recovery unless private investment sees fit and intervenes; or the town council and traders collaborate.



Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

12 Strategic Commitments

1. Host and support events to inspire both local trading and business development.
2. Resolve local business and trading issues in liaison and negotiation with the IOWC.
3. Explore with town traders and businesses improvements to shop fronts and displays.
4. Help promote the benefits of visiting, shopping and trading in the town centre.
5. Take the lead role in developing the future identity of the town centre.
6. Explore incentives for both current and new businesses operating in the town centre.
7. Encourage the use of internet e-commerce technologies by local traders and businesses.
8. Work with local representatives to support community activities and cultural events.
9. Explore and initiate town centre infrastructure improvements and shopping experience.
10. Work with local community agencies to strengthen residential community spirit.
11. Explore commercial avenues for product distribution by local traders and businesses.
12. Develop community links and projects with the local farming community.

fppt.com

Global Economy

If you want to survive then you have to adapt. If you don't, then you will become extinct and other businesses with an edge, will take over.



Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012

Final Analysis

This work has been done in all good conscience for Ventnor's town centre trading community. There is a right and a wrong way to regenerate trade. But the wrong way will resonate and affect future generations to come. Let us hopefully make the right decisions.



Copyright Ventnor Town Council 2012